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Running head: CHALLENGING THE STANDARD STORY

Challenging the Standard Story of Indigenous Rights in Aotearoa / New Zealand

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Abstract

Three public submissions are discursively analysed to understand how history, identity and equality are used to legitimise positions on indigenous rights claims over the foreshore and seabed in Aotearoa / New Zealand. The first submission illustrates the Standard Story of ethnic relations, whereby the ethnic majority is unmarked, colonisation is construed as unrelated to the present, and a tolerant, unified nation is constructed to exclude 'divisive' indigenous rights. In contrast, the second submission legitimises the claims by flagging the position of the ethnic majority, construing colonisation as an ongoing process that continues to favour Pakeha (white) New Zealanders over Maori. The third submission works up the similarity between indigenous rights and general property rights, negotiating the relationship between equal treatment and self-determination to legitimise the claims. We argue that discursive research on discrimination should approach texts as contributions to a dialectics of racism and anti-racism. This is useful for gaining a better understanding of oppressive discourses, and developing arguments that actively challenge discrimination. The Treaty of Waitangi provides Pakeha New Zealanders with discursive resources for constructing the subject position of a "partnership" with Maori that legitimises the positions of both groups within a shared national identity.

Challenging the Standard Story of Indigenous Rights in Aotearoa / New Zealand

‘They shoot the white girl first.’ (Morrison, 1999, p. 3)

These are the first words of Toni Morrison’s novel on a fictitious black town in America. They disrupt the understanding that ‘white people do not have an ethnicity, which is only a problem for minorities’ (Mansfield, 2000, p. 119). For instance, in discussing one of the characters from an Ernest Hemmingway novel, Morrison (1992, p. 72) remarks that ‘Eddy is white, and we know he is because nobody says so.’ In literature, hiding the ethnic position of those who are white, and flagging the position of those who are not, construes the ethnic majority as the norm, while portraying ethnic minorities as unnatural, strange or deviant. In the discussion of ethnic rights this convention functions in a similar and powerful manner to deny the legitimacy of indigenous rights and uphold the status quo.

Within the last two decades, a large amount of discursive psychological research (e.g., Edwards, 1997; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) has emerged regarding the legitimisation of the exploitation of indigenous peoples, particularly in Australia and New Zealand (for a review, see LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001). Nairn and McCreanor (1990, 1991) used the term ‘Standard Story’ to refer to this commonsense way of understanding and talking about ethnic relations. McCreanor (1993, p. 60) summarised the recurring patterns identified in their analyses of the texts and talk of Pakehaⁱ New Zealanders, which included the following themes: ‘If Maori agitators (‘stirrers’) would stop stirring up trouble where none actually exists, race relations would be harmonious’; ‘Maori have special privileges which are unfair and racist’; ‘All people in New Zealand are New Zealanders and should be treated the same’. The

legitimacy of Maori claims to inherited rights was also discredited by challenging the reality of the ethnic group itself: 'There are few 'real' Maori left'. The ways in which Maori are construed effectively renders illegitimate any action to rectify the disadvantaged position of Maori in New Zealand society.

Wetherell and Potter (1992) conducted the most comprehensive work in this area with their analysis of interviews illustrating the ways in which Pakeha New Zealanders justified the past exploitation and continued lower status of Maori in New Zealand society. They outlined the common 'interpretive repertoires' that were used – for example: 'Everybody should be treated equally'; 'You cannot turn the clock backwards'; 'Present generations cannot be blamed for the mistakes of past generations'; 'You have to be practical' (p. 177). An important aspect of these repertoires is the way in which they ward off potential accusations of racism (see Liu & Mills, in press). The arguments are notable for the way they are framed in terms of liberal and egalitarian values, making the speaker appear rational and just, despite the end product of legitimising inequality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

With regard to Australian research, Rapley (1998, p. 335) identified the way in which politician Pauline Hanson argued that she should not have to 'pay and continue paying for something that happened over 200 years ago'. Similarly, Prime Minister John Howard, stated that 'Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control' (Augoustinos, LeCouteur and Soyland, 2002, p. 129). Further, Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999) identified the following interdependent arguments: a focus on addressing the past is not constructive; similarities across Australians should be emphasised; achieving equality at the national level, rather than focusing on Aboriginal people, is the most legitimate way of dealing with Aboriginal disadvantage. As noted by Riggs

and Augoustinos (this volume), such practices maintain the privileged position of whites in Australia by marginalizing the destructive reality of colonisation; these discursive moves distance present-day non-indigenous Australians from those involved in the cultural devastation of Aboriginal people, producing a subject position of whiteness that keeps alive the psychological and sociological legacy of colonization. The Standard Story, as told by Australians and New Zealanders of European descent, proposes that colonisation was ‘something bad’ that happened a long time ago, that indigenous people of the past suffered, but that present-day people of European descent were not directly part of this process and therefore should not be blamed. Indigenous people should move on from the past and take responsibility for improving their status (LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001).

Much extant discursive research, such as Wetherell and Potter’s (1992) extensive critique of the oppressive talk of ‘Pakeha New Zealanders’, has illustrated how indigenous rights are discredited, yet it has not provided argumentative alternatives. Green and Sonn (this volume) suggest that even discourse generated by participants of a progressive social programme in Australia is monological, reflecting the dictations of an all-powerful white majority rather than the give and take of collaboration or contestation. We assert that the critical element of discursive work could be strengthened by developing argumentative resources that members of the ethnic majority can use to support indigenous rights.

Despite the overall dominance of the white majority in New Zealand, Liu (in press) argues that New Zealanders have a broader repertoire of discursive and representational resources available to them in countering racism against indigenous people than citizens of other settler societies. This is because the Treaty of Waitangi, signed between the British Crown and Maori chieftains in 1840 is widely regarded as

the most important event in New Zealand history (Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999). The Treaty serves as the centrepiece of a bicultural narrative wherein national sovereignty is based on a covenant between Maori and the Crown. While this narrative is by no means undisputed (Liu, in press), most New Zealanders value at least the *symbolic* contributions of Maori to the national identity (Sibley & Liu, 2004). In New Zealand, it is relatively easy to talk about subject positions envisioning a partnership between Maori and Pakeha as part of the national identity, provided this does not involve *categorical* privileges to the minority in terms of resource allocation (Sibley, Liu, & Kirkwood, in press).

In line with this perspective, Tuffin, Praat and Frewin (2004) developed one of the few studies specifically dealing with alternatives to the Standard Story of ethnic relations in Aotearoa. By analysing the talk of one Pakeha New Zealander, they illustrated the way in which Maori rights could be legitimated through locating misunderstanding and discrimination in the Crown, construing Maori and non-Maori as mutual victims of colonisation. In this way – provided power asymmetries are not obscured – ‘matters that are traditionally regarded as solely Maori become the concern of all New Zealanders’ (Tuffin et al., 2004, p. 106).

Along similar lines, Essed (1991, 1996) and Mama (1995) analysed the ways in which Black women interpreted the world so as to allow discrimination to be critiqued and challenged, and Lamont, Morning and Mooney (2002) analysed the rhetorical devices used by North African immigrants in France to respond to racism. Similarly, Saxton (2004) analysed the talk of indigenous Australians to show how reconciliation could be legitimised through reference to a common humanity. Tuffin and Every (2005) also noted how people could support affirmative action through recognising structural discrimination.

The importance of looking at such alternatives to the Standard Story is endorsed by a rhetorical approach to social psychology (Billig et al, 1988; Billig, 1996).

According to Billig, thought is fundamentally argumentative - shaped implicitly or explicitly in relation to other views. Unchallenged positions are culturally normative: thus resistance to hegemonic ideas is necessarily argumentative. A crucial idea here is that thought functions not, as typically theorised, as a monologue but as dialogue (Billig, 1996). Anti-racist arguing, thinking and being requires continual engagement with the dialectics of racism and anti-racism so as to develop an explicit and well articulated anti-racist response to the status quo. It therefore follows that identifying and rearticulating challenges to the Standard Story is a form of political activism, and it is on this assumption that the present study proceeds.

As indigenous rights claims rest, to some extent, on the continuity of identity through history (Iverson, 2003; Liu & Hilton, in press), the present analysis focuses on notions of identity and history in relation to equality. Rather than treating identity categories and historical accounts as objective or stable entities, Reicher and Hopkins (1996, 2001) illustrated how social actors flexibly construct narratives of history that render legitimate and gain support for their political projects through construing these projects as necessitated by the national identity. Because the nation is presently regarded as the most legitimate level for political action, gaining support relies on construing one's own view as being consistent with the interests of the nation, therefore maximising the potential constituency, while portraying dissenters as being disloyal or troublesome. Hopkins, Reicher & Levine (1997, p. 326) specifically advocated this constructionist approach to issues of racism and identity, encouraging social psychologists to 'ensure that they critique rather than reproduce common-sense racism'.

Following along these lines, we will analyse the ways in which various national, ethnic and ancestral identities are mobilised to draw support for, or resistance against, indigenous rights. The intention is to theorise the potential for positive subject positions (Davies & Harré, 2001) that will facilitate personal and political intervention against discrimination (Essed, 1996; Willig, 1999). This study will examine arguments and positions relating to the claims lodged by Maori over rights to areas of foreshore and seabed in Aotearoa, as this is an instance of controversial and contemporary debate regarding indigenous rights that has significant outcomes for people and policy.

Seabed and Foreshore Claims

The foreshore is the area covered daily by the sea, between high and low tide, and the seabed is everything below this out to the 12-mile limit. At the time of colonisation, rights over areas of foreshore and seabed had not been given or sold by Maori to the Crown, nor had the Crown taken ownership of these areas (Powell, 2003). Colonising powers are obliged by internationally accepted standards to recognise the long-standing rights of indigenous peoples (Powell, 2003). Despite Maori making repeated assertions of those rights, successive New Zealand governments have legislated to deny or curtail Maori rights to the foreshore (see Orange, 1987).

Most recently, the Government passed the Foreshore and Seabed Act in November 2004. In discussing the Act, Erueti (2004) explained that it will be very difficult for iwi to meet the evidential requirements to support claims for territorial customary rights. He pointed out that even if groups do meet the requirements they will not gain the rights entitled to them, but may instead enter into discussion with the government to seek compensation for having been denied legal recognition of these rights. The United Nations Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2005) stated that the legislation discriminated against Maori. Thus it is a clear instance of

racist legislation, obliterating indigenous property rights without adequate recourse to compensation.

The Submissions

Between August 18th and October 24th 2003, the Government received 2171 written submissions regarding the proposed foreshore and seabed legislation that was consequently passed in November 2004 (see above). The first author read and sorted all of these submissions, and selected sections from three to be analysed for the purpose of this study.ⁱⁱ The first was chosen to illustrate aspects of the Standard Story of ethnic relations as outlined in previous research, the second to illustrate the positioning of an organisation that directly challenges the premises of the Standard Story, and the third to illustrate the positioning of an individual who redefines elements of the Standard Story to oppose the legislation. The intention is to analyse in detail the argumentative fabric that constitutes the dialectics of racism and anti-racism. In this regard, we aim to be illustrative and constructive rather than representative.

The Standard Story

Extract 1 [submission 217]

1. Dear Helen
2. I am writing to you as a concerned kiwi, with regard to recent events attempted
3. maori ownership of our sea bed and coastline of our country. Are we to dispell the
4. myth to the world that we as a nation celebrate our multi-cultrual belief that
5. segrgation is alive and well in New Zealand. It appears there are too many that
6. prefer to hold onto the past, rather than as a nation move forward together. I am
7. tired of paying for my forefathers mistakes. 20 years on my own children are being
8. subjected, to something that happend back in 1840. We are reminded periodically

9. that maori own this land; Yet on the rugby field / netball court we are a proud
10. nation all cultures come together, but as soon as the land is mentioned we would
11. sooner not discuss it, for with this subject comes so much anger, segregation, huge
12. set backs, I want to feel safe in the knowledge that the beaches belong to all who
13. visit there, this is getting ridiculous. When will it all end? I cannot see it, why
14. can't people just get along. Maori are not doing themselves any justice by being
15. greedy.

Self identifying as a 'concerned kiwi'ⁱⁱⁱ (2), and referring to 'attempted maori ownership of our sea bed and coastline of our country' (2-3), aligns the author with the letter's addressee, the Prime Minister ('Helen' (1)) – who stands in as an elected embodiment of the will of the nation – and implies that the this land already belongs to non-ethnically defined New Zealanders. By portraying the issue in this way, Maori rights are placed outside the interests of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Lines 3-6 suggest that the claims represent a threat to the supposed harmony of ethnic relations in Aotearoa / New Zealand. The implied negativity of being stuck in the past and threatening the unity of the nation, rather than moving towards the future together, resonates with the common-sense modernist notions of linear progress and the inherent merit of unity at the national level (Billig, 1995). Lines 6-8 distinguish present day New Zealanders of European descent from their forefathers, and the history of colonisation is presented in vague and underplayed terms as 'mistakes' and 'something that happen[e]d back in 1840'. By avoiding specific details of colonisation, the negative actions of the colonisers are downplayed, and responsibility is shifted off people in the present (see Augoustinos et al., 1999).

Lines 9-12 juxtapose a positive portrayal of multiculturalism, where all cultures unite on the sports field on behalf of the nation, with angry indigenous rights claims. The construction of a binary opposition between positive and negative ethnic relations suggests that the author is tolerant of cultural difference, but that cultural difference need not entail divisive claims that cause conflict and threaten unity (West-Newman, 2004). By flagging Maori as the only ethnic group throughout the letter, the discriminatory nature of indigenous rights claims is accentuated and contrasted with the tolerant and fair character of all other New Zealanders, who support a unified nation that is inclusive of different cultural groups.

In sum Extract 1 illustrates an instance of the Standard Story (Nairn & McCreanor, 1990, 1991) of ethnic relations in Aotearoa / New Zealand being used to endorse a racist piece of legislation. The author adopts the subject position of the ‘tolerant individual’ while simultaneously refusing what are internationally recognized as indigenous rights to the seabed and foreshore. Supporters of indigenous rights are relegated to the unlivable subject positions (Barclay, in press) of accusers, apologists, or selfish people stuck in the past (Nairn & McCreanor, 1991).

Alternatives to the Standard Story

To reiterate Billig’s (1996) rhetorical approach, the Standard Story is best challenged by mobilising and promoting arguments geared to contest it. Approaching the texts in this dialogical fashion has the two-fold benefit of allowing a more comprehensive understanding of the Standard Story while exploring the positions from which to develop interventions against discrimination that have been lacking from previous research.

Challenging the Standard Story

The following submission has been broken down into three sections to aid analysis.

Extract 2 [submission 1420]

1. Wellington Independent Rape Crisis is making a submission on the seabed issue
2. because as a Pakeha / Tauwi group we feel it is important that we express our
3. concern and opposition to the action that the Crown has taken on this issue and the
4. process that it has directed.

The self-categorisation as a ‘Pakeha / Tauwi group’^{iv} highlights an ethnic identity alongside Maori that is indigenous to the New Zealand context. Note the contrast to that of the ‘concerned kiwi’ of the first letter, which is a non-ethnic albeit native level of identity.

Extract3 [submission 1420 continued]

5. As an organisation we have a commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and we
6. acknowledge Maori as Tangata Whenua with Tino Rangatiratanga.
7. We recognise:
8. Bodily rape cannot be isolated from the rape many women feel of their land and
9. culture.
10. Rape is a violation of freedom and self-determination, upheld by patriarchal and
11. colonial society.
12. Maori people as Tangata Whenua and we acknowledge our accountability to
13. Maori people. We do not expect Maori people to be accountable to us.
14. That we have a responsibility to examine and act on oppressive structures in our

15. organisations, for example racist, classist, heterosexist ways of operating.

In extract 3, Maori are acknowledged not just as another ethnic group but as Tangata Whenua with Tino Rangatiratanga, that is, as “first peoples” (or people of the land) with a special and legitimate place in the country including specific rights with respect to the exercise of sovereignty or self-determination. Drawing an analogy between bodily and cultural rape brings into sharper focus the unequal distribution of power that favours Pakeha interests and typically results in the on-going systematic suppression of Maori rights. Rather than ‘paying’ for mistakes of the past, support for indigenous rights equates to arguing for the rights of any group to freedom, non-violation, and self-determination.

Extract 4 [submission 1420 continued]

16. As an organisation we see the Governments foreshore and seabed proposal to
 17. take away Maori rights as a further demonstration of colonisation and a further
 18. violation of freedom and self-determination for Tangata Whenua.
 19. This proposal is a clear breach of Article II of The Treaty of Waitangi which
 20. reaffirms to Iwi and Hapu the Tino Rangatiratanga of their lands, all their
 21. possessions and everything they hold precious.

Lines 16-21 cement the claim that the current situation is an extension of the colonising process, and that it violates the historical and legal legitimacy of Tino Rangatiratanga. This is a central rebuttal of the Standard Story: colonisation is still occurring; it is not merely something that happened in the past. Much as referring to the principles of egalitarianism denies the legitimacy of ‘special treatment’, in the New Zealand context

stating that a particular action breaches the Treaty of Waitangi functions as a self-sufficient argument (Augoustinos et al., 2002; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) rendering the breaching action illegitimate. It is a testament to the social understanding of the significance of the Treaty that this statement needs no further elaboration (see Orange, 1987, for an extended historical discussion, and Liu et al., 1999 for empirical data). The strategic essentialisation of Maori as an indigenous group with specific rights and location accentuates the way in which colonial systems inherently discriminate against indigenous people, just as patriarchal systems discriminate against women.

Redefining Elements of the Standard Story

While the previous submission directly challenges every aspect of the Standard Story, this submission takes a different tack, reproducing many of its arguments concerning the principle of equality, but redefining central elements in crucial ways.

Extract 5 [submission 900]

1. I wish to make a submission on the Government's proposals [...].
2. I do so as a third-generation pakeha New Zealander who has a passionate
3. commitment to the building of a strong and harmonious national society, based on
4. the recognition and protection of the rights and interests of all New Zealanders,
5. including the special rights and interests of Maori as the tangata whenua [...]
6. There are also two other, over-arching principles that must be applied if any
7. solution involving legislation is to have any prospect of being accepted and
8. honoured. They are:
9. The principle of respect for property rights: the Government must respect
10. the property rights of all New Zealanders, without discrimination
11. The principle of acceptability to Maori: Principle ought not to enact

12. legislation affecting things of particular importance to Maori unless its terms
13. are generally acceptable to Maori. [...]
14. If they are not observed, Maori are likely to claim, in the New Zealand courts and
15. internationally, that they have been deprived of their property in an arbitrary and
16. discriminatory fashion. Today's grievances are likely to become tomorrow's new
17. claims before the Waitangi Tribunal.

The author's self-identification implies a long-standing, indigenous (but note the small 'p' of Pakeha) connection with the nation, while locating the author ethnically in relation to Maori. This is congruent with the assertion that the recognition of the specific rights of Maori as tangata whenua is central to the construction of a harmonious nation. The inclusive, non-ethnic based requirement of respecting the property rights of all New Zealanders is a crucial rhetorical move because it finds common ground with the Standard Story and effectively produces a sense of reasonableness; traditional / indigenous property rights should be upheld just like any property title granted under British common law.

Invocation of the second principle goes further and endorses the interests of Maori with respect to legislation affecting matters of importance to them— the principle of partnership between Maori and the Crown central to modern-day interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi (see Graham, 1997). It is significant that the specific rights of Maori (lines 11-13) are not construed as privilege, which would violate liberal doctrine. Rather, the author finesses the principle of a “special partnership” between Maori and the Crown as constitutional rights that every group has in relation to things of importance to them. Portraying indigenous rights as congruent with the interests of the nation, while distinguishing between different ethnic locations

encourages support for the foreshore claims from Pakeha New Zealanders without impinging on the self-determination of Maori.

Liu (in press) reported extensive qualitative and quantitative data elaborating on the relationship between different labels for white New Zealanders and support or opposition towards Maori claims. The importance of the identity of Pakeha New Zealander can be understood when considered in relation to arguments against such a definition. Consider the following brief extract from submission number 503, a submission that argued against the legitimacy of the foreshore claims: ‘The term Pakeha has an offensive connotation to many New Zealanders. If all citizens are known as New Zealanders, this ethnic label can be dropped.’ This resistance to the ethnic label Pakeha fits with the Standard Story, whereby everyone in New Zealand needs to be treated the same, so Maori have no differential rights or status in relation to other New Zealanders. Ethnic identification of the majority ethnic group in New Zealand, through the term Pakeha, signals that they have specific cultural perspectives, histories and interests that are not be identical, but complementary to those of Maori New Zealanders. Mama (1995) discussed how the subject position of ‘black British’ is a confrontational assertion of one’s duality and legitimacy, of being both a member of the nation and having a specific ethnic location, in a context where Britishness is equated with whiteness and anything else is simply ‘Other’. Similarly, the Pakeha New Zealander subject position allows resistance to discriminatory, colonial actions, while disrupting the assumption that whiteness is the norm.

Discussion

The Standard Story (Nairn & McCreanor, 1990, 1991), as illustrated by the first submission, masks the ethnic and cultural aspects of governmental and majority rule power structures, implying that they work fairly for all of the competing interests of the

nation. In doing so, colonisation is constructed as something that happened in the past, involving people who are no longer around, meaning that history has no relevance for equality in the present. In contrast, the second and third submissions render these ethnic aspects visible, stimulating understanding and respect for the differential position of Tangata Whenua in New Zealand, and encouraging critique of powerful and ethnically motivated perspectives and interests. That is, the democratic government does not necessarily work neutrally and fairly for everyone in the country; rather it favours the statistical and powerful majority. These alternatives to the Standard Story are in line with the work of Tuffin et al. (2004), illustrating how a common group may be constructed that works in the interests of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996, 2001), in opposition to the discriminatory acts of the Crown, while taking into account the specific location of different ethnic groups (Mama, 1995). Adopting this Pakeha / Tauwiwi subject position highlights the social location of the ethnic majority, as well as emphasising the sense in which colonisation is an ongoing process that continues to maintain inequalities into the present day.

The second and third submissions emphasised the two slightly different ways of asserting the legitimacy of indigenous rights identified by Ivison (2003). The second text appealed to the 'historical, cultural and political specificity' (Ivison, 2003, p. 325) of Maori as a group with particular rights as the indigenous people of Aotearoa, rights that were specifically protected through the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (see Liu, et al., 1999). The essential difference between Maori and Pakeha was asserted, focusing on the way in which the Government functions from a Pakeha perspective, working in favour of the Pakeha majority, to the disadvantage of Maori. The Government's foreshore legislation was therefore construed as discriminatory, as it did not take into account the specific location of Maori within New Zealand.

In contrast, the third text argued that indigenous rights are simply a particular form of basic human rights – or in this case, property rights – that should be protected in the interests of all (Iverson, 2003). Rather than asserting difference, it was through asserting similarity, and drawing on liberal concepts of equality, that the claims were construed as legitimate. However, these two grounds of legitimacy should not be treated as mutually exclusive. Just as the declaration of ‘prejudiced’ views involves negotiating concepts of fairness and rationality (Billig et al., 1988), this analysis illustrates that arguments in favour of indigenous rights also take on this dilemmatic quality, negotiating concepts of similarity and difference, equal treatment and self-determination, without finally settling for one over the other. This is particularly salient with the self-identity of being a Pakeha New Zealander, where ethnic and national identity co-exist, rather than one subsuming the other. Similarly, both texts emphasized the notion of partnership between Maori and Pakeha / *Tauīwi*, working up a bicultural narrative of identity.

Previous discursive research has tended to treat the Standard Story as a sort of oppressive monologue (see Augoustinos et al., 1999, 2002; Nairn & McCreanor, 1990, 1991; Rapley, 1998; Wetherell, 2003; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Even Condor’s work (this volume), which emphasises collaborative social processes involved in producing texts, deals predominantly with cases where a hegemonic and prejudiced viewpoint is produced. We have taken on the arguments of Billig (1996) that statements can best be understood by looking at the alternative views that they implicitly or explicitly undermine. In the present study, analysing arguments and constructions in relation to counter-arguments has provided a better understanding of the resistance to the ethnic labelling of the majority ethnic group, and has helped to articulate the ideological implications of commonsense ways of discussing ethnic relations. Further, it provides a

corollary to previously identified discursive repertoires and subject positions by offering alternative positions and arguments that may facilitate personal and political action against discrimination.

In the terms of Willig (1999), the present study investigates the potential for empowering subject positions that make the important link between social critique and intervention with regard to discrimination and ethnic rights. That is, while extant research has been useful in the identification and critique of discriminatory discourses, it has not provided concrete suggestions for how their claims can be applied to change discriminatory policy or practices. Willig suggested that the analysis of alternative subject positions (Davies & Harré, 2001) is one way of bridging this gap. Taking up the subject position and arguments of a Pakeha / Tauwi New Zealander should promote challenges to the Standard Story of ethnic relations and indigenous rights, through reinterpreting potentially discriminatory discourse (e.g., McCreanor, 1993), responding critically to discriminatory talk on a personal level (e.g., Geurin, 2003), or actively engaging with people and Government in the social and political realm.

A bicultural narrative for New Zealand (Liu, in press) that configures the meaning of historical events and empowers subject positions wherein the relationship between Maori and Pakeha / Tauwi is central to the national identity is a powerful resource, both nationally and internationally. It needs to be further developed, particularly in the ways it negotiates the difficult situation of preserving indigenous rights without running afoul of equality-based discourses (Sibley, Liu, & Kirkwood, in press). Internationally, we note the endurance of racism (Leach, this volume) and the difficulty of producing discursive challenges to dominant ways of talking about race relations, and suggest that Aotearoa may be a site where societal debate is forming alternative interpretive repertoires.

In pursuing this, we need to be aware that these suggestions are partial and historically located tools and avoid reifying one way of acting that may be limited or detrimental to other social groups in the long term (Hall, 1996). Relationalising rather than essentialising the position of the dominant group may be an important strategy in such an undertaking (Barclay, in press).

The next logical step for research in this vein is to analyse the subject positions and arguments taken up by indigenous people when legitimating indigenous rights and critiquing discrimination. Verkuyten (2005) argued that focusing solely on majority ethnic group members downplays the diversity within majority and minority groups, and he illustrated how people from both groups drew on similar arguments with regard to ethnic discrimination in Dutch society. It is also a fundamental aspect of critical and discursive psychology to take identity categories as a topic of study rather than treat them as objective elements of a pre-given reality (Hopkins et al., 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). However, as non-indigenous researchers, we must carefully consider the appropriateness of such an undertaking. We support the self-determination of indigenous people (Awatere, 1984) and agree that it is the prerogative of indigenous groups to define how they speak about their claims (Iverson, 2003). We therefore support the suggestions of Smith (1999), recognising the oppressive and demeaning history of the relationship between research and indigenous people, and see supportive collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers as the most ethically and politically sound way of proceeding. Having said this, we also admit to knowing few sustained collaborations between Pakeha and Maori researchers in the area of race relations. This implies that building research capacity among indigenous groups is central to a forwardly moving critical psychology that is capable of more expansive dialogue in the future.

The notion of collaboration brings us back to the concept of dialogue that is central to our study. If thinking is the internal form of argumentation (Billig, 1996), discussion and engagement with opposing arguments is crucial for the development of critical thought. It is imperative that we critically analyse the arguments against perspectives we wish to challenge, and carefully consider the relationship between these positions, particularly if we are to develop pragmatic suggestions on how to proceed in society. It is especially important to produce positive ways of engaging with the world in the case of discrimination, for, in the words of Toni Morrison, ‘The world does not become raceless or will not become unracialized by assertion’ (Morrison, 1992, p. 46).

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ⁱ 'Pakeha' generally refers to Non-Maori, particularly those of European descent (Ryan, 1995); the exact meaning of the term is debatable (Liu, in press).

ⁱⁱ The submissions were obtained in electronic format on request from the Parliament office. Spelling and grammatical errors in the originals are retained.

ⁱⁱⁱ 'Kiwi' is a colloquial term for New Zealanders, derived from the name of a native flightless bird.

^{iv} Although the term 'Tauwi' can be translated to mean 'alien' or 'foreigner' (Ryan, 1995), it is here used to denote those who are not Maori.